

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Previously presented): A method for the reprocessing of a thermoplastic polycondensate, having the following method steps:

introducing the polycondensate into an extruder in a solid state,

heating the polycondensate to a temperature below the melting point and degassing and/or drying the polycondensate,

using a conveying device at a degassing opening in order to convey polycondensate escaping via the degassing opening back into the extruder,

melting the polycondensate,

wherein the degassing and/or drying of the polycondensate takes place in the solid state at a pressure below atmospheric pressure and/or with an inert gas being added, and the polycondensate is introduced into the extruder in the form of flakes or powder, the thickness of the flakes being on average less than 2 mm and the greatest extent being on average less than 20 mm.

Claim 2 (Currently amended): Method according to claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic polycondensate is polyester, ~~in particular~~ polyethylene terephthalate, or polyamide.

Claim 3 (Canceled).

Claim 4 (Previously presented): Method according to claim 1, wherein the polycondensate is flushed with the inert gas in the solid state.

Claim 5 (Previously presented): Method according to claim 1, wherein the polycondensate is subjected to a pressure below atmospheric pressure and/or the inert gas already before it is introduced into the extruder.

Claim 6 (Previously presented): Method according to claim 1, wherein the polycondensate is heated to a temperature below the melting temperature of the polycondensate already before it is introduced into the extruder.

Claim 7 (Currently amended): Method according to claim 1, wherein the inert gas is added at a temperature of 60°C to 250°C, ~~preferably 100°C to 160°C.~~

Claim 8 (Previously presented): Method according to claim 1, wherein, after the melting of the polycondensate, further degassing of the polycondensate melt takes place.

Claim 9 (Previously presented): Method according to claim 8, wherein the degassing of the polycondensate melt takes place with an inert gas being added beforehand.

Claim 10 (Previously presented): Method according to claim 9, wherein the inert gas is added in a condensed state to the polycondensate melt at an increased pressure and, subsequently, the pressure of the polycondensate melt is lowered, so that the inert gas escapes from the polycondensate melt.

Claim 11 (Previously presented): Method according to claim 1 wherein the inert gas is nitrogen, dried air, carbon dioxide or a noble gas.

Claim 12 (Previously presented): Method according to claim 8 wherein the polycondensate melt can be passed through at least one melt pump.

Claim 13 (Previously presented): Method according to claim 8, wherein the polycondensate melt is passed through at least one melt filter.

Claim 14 (Currently amended): Method according to claim 13, wherein the use of melt filters may take place in the conveying direction of the polycondensate, after melting of the polycondensate, ~~preferably downstream of the extruder.~~

Claim 15 (Previously presented): Method according to claim 13, wherein, following the melt filter, further degassing of the polycondensate may take place.

Claim 16 (Currently amended): Method according to claim 1, wherein one or more of additional substances, are selected from the group consisting of such as color pigments, fillers, processing aids, stabilizers, and substances reacting with the polycondensate, which are introduced into the extruder along with the polycondensate.

Claim 17 (Previously presented): Method according to claim 16, wherein the melt viscosity and/or melt elasticity of the polycondensate melt is modified by the use of a substance reacting with the polycondensate.

Claim 18 (Previously presented): Method according to claim 17, wherein the substance reacting with the polycondensate increases the melt viscosity and/or melt elasticity of the polycondensate by a chain-extending and/or chain-crosslinking reaction with the polycondensate.

Claim 19 (Previously presented): Method according to claim 1, wherein further polycondensation of the polycondensate melt takes place under vacuum conditions.

Claim 20-31 (Canceled).

Claim 32 (Previously presented): The method according to claim 14, after the step of melting the polycondensate, further comprising using melt filters downstream of the extruder in the conveying direction of the polycondensate.

Claim 33 (New): Method according to claim 1, wherein the inert gas is added at a temperature of 100°C to 160°C.